Amendments to the Specification

The changes in the specification from its immediate prior version are shown with ~~strikethrough~~ or [[double brackets]] for deleted matter and <u>underlines</u> for added matter.

1. Please amend paragraph 14 as follows:

[0014] In a third aspect, the invention is an aqueous syrup for use in making both stick and pellet chewing gum products comprising, on a dry basis:

a) about 60% to about 80% sorbitol,

b) about 8% to about 15% plasticizing agent selected from the group consisting of glycerin, propylene glycol and mixtures thereof, and

c) about 5% to about 30% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate <u>solids</u>, the hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate <u>solids</u> containing hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP of at least 3 or greater of at least 1.5% of the dry basis of the syrup, and at least 4% maltitol on the dry basis of the syrup.

2. Please amend paragraph 28 as follows:

[0028] The preferred syrup of the present invention comprises, on a dry basis, about 30% to about 80% sorbitol, about 8% to about 20% of a plasticizing agent, and about 5% to about 30% of a hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate solids. More preferably, the syrup comprises, on a dry basis, about 50% to about 70% sorbitol, about 8% to about 15% plasticizing agent and about 5% to about 25% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate solids. For some purposes, the syrup will comprise about 60% to about 80% sorbitol, about 8% to about 15% plasticizing agent and about 5% to about 25% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate solids containing maltitol and at least 1.5% (by weight of the syrup) hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP of 3 or higher. A presently preferred syrup contains about 70% sorbitol, about 13% plasticizing agent and about 15% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate solids. <u>An exemplary syrup comprises, after evaporation, a solids content of about 50% to about 80% sorbitol, about 4% to about 25% maltitol, and about 1.5% to about 5% hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP greater than 3 and with a weight average DP of between about 4 and about 5.</u>

3. Please amend paragraph 39 as follows:

[0039] The aqueous sorbitol, plasticizing agent and hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate syrup can be provided in different combinations and ratios. Preferably, the inventive syrup will be made from a mixture of about 52% to about 87% aqueous sorbitol solution, about 8% to about 20% plasticizing agent and about 5% to about 30% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate syrup. More preferably, the inventive syrup will be made from a mixture of about 60% to about 75% sorbitol solution, about 8% to about 15% plasticizing agent and about 8% to about 20% hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate syrup.

4. Please amend paragraph 54 as follows:

[0054] Softeners are added to the chewing gum in order to optimize the chewability and mouth feel of the gum. The softeners, which are also known as plasticizers and plasticizing agents, generally constitute between approximately 0.5 to about 15% by weight of the chewing gum. The softeners may include glycerin, lecithin, and combinations thereof. Aqueous sweetener solutions such as those containing sorbitol, hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate solids, corn syrup and combinations thereof, may also be used as softeners and binding agents in chewing gum. Thus, the sugarless syrup of the present invention can be used as a softener and binding agent.

5. Please amend the second indented paragraph following Table I as follows:

** Created by coevaporation of 70% sorbitol solution, glycerin, and hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate syrup to give a syrup with 3% water, 13.1% glycerin, 69% sorbitol, 0.5% mannitol, 11.2% maltitol, and 3.2% hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP of 3 or higher.

6. Please amend the second indented paragraph following Table II as follows:

** Created by coevaporation of 70% sorbitol solution, glycerin, and hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate syrup to give a syrup with 3% water,

13.1% glycerin, 69% sorbitol, 0.5% mannitol, 11.2% maltitol, and 3.2% hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP of 3 or higher.

7. Please amend the indented paragraph following Table III as follows:

** Created by coevaporation of 70% sorbitol solution, glycerin, and hydrogenated starch <u>hydrolyzate</u> syrup to give a syrup with 3% water, 13.1% glycerin, 69% sorbitol, 0.5% mannitol, 11.2% maltitol, and 3.2% hydrogenated oligosaccharides having a DP of 3 or higher.

8. Please amend paragraph 92 as follows:

[0092] A sorbitol syrup containing a plasticizing agent and hydrogenated starch hydrolyzate <u>solids</u> and only 3% water (hereinafter “sugarless syrup”) such as used in any of Examples 1-7, may be used in a sugarless, non-cariogenic hard candy as shown in the following formulas: